

Claims

1. (Currently amended) A method for constructing a retaining wall, the method comprising:

forming a trench in the ground;

positioning a plurality of retaining wall blocks side-by-side to form a lowermost course of blocks spaced above the bottom of the trench and having voids between adjacent blocks; and

forming a concrete footing in the trench and the voids between adjacent blocks to better resist against outward sliding forces exerted by retained earth at the lowermost course, wherein at least a portion of the footing is formed from a single layer of concrete occupying space in the voids and space below the blocks.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the lowermost course has a width that is greater than the width of the footing.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the front of the lowermost course of blocks is located in front of the trench and the back of the lowermost course of blocks is located in back of the trench.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the lowermost course comprises a first course and the method further comprises forming a second course of retaining wall blocks over the first course.

5. (Original) The method of claim 4, wherein forming a second course of retaining wall blocks over the first course comprises connecting the blocks of the second course to the blocks of the first course by a mortarless connection.

6. (Original) The method of claim 5, comprising connecting the blocks of the second course to the blocks of the first course with a plurality of block-connecting elements extending into the upper surfaces of the blocks of the first course and the lower surfaces of the blocks of the second course.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the lowermost course comprises a plurality of generally I-shaped block assemblies positioned side-by-side over the trench, each block assembly comprising a front block positioned in front of the trench, an anchor block positioned in back of the trench, and an elongated trunk block extending over the trench.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein forming a concrete footing in the trench and the voids comprises introducing concrete into the trench and the voids via the upper openings of the voids.

9. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the at least a portion of the footing comprises an upper portion of the footing and the footing further comprises a lower portion formed in the trench ~~and an upper portion formed in the voids between adjacent blocks,~~ and wherein at least the upper portion of the footing is formed after the lowermost course of blocks is formed by introducing concrete into the voids via the upper openings thereof.

10. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the at least a portion of the footing comprises an upper portion of the footing and the footing further comprises a lower portion and the method comprises comprising forming a the lower footing portion in the trench, forming the lowermost course of blocks after forming the lower footing portion, and forming an the upper footing portion in the voids and in the space below the blocks after forming the lowermost course of blocks.

11. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein forming the lower footing portion comprises forming an elongated channel in the upper surface of the lower footing portion, and forming the upper footing portion comprises forming a downwardly extending projection of the upper footing portion in the channel.

12. (Original) A method for constructing a retaining wall, the method comprising:
  - forming a trench in the ground at the base of the wall;
  - forming a lowermost course of retaining wall blocks over the trench, said course comprising a plurality of voids; and
  - forming a concrete footing in the trench and the voids to interconnect the lowermost course with the ground to better resist against outward sliding forces exerted by retained earth at the lowermost course, wherein the footing has a width that is less than the width of the course.
13. (Original) The method of claim 12, comprising positioning the retaining wall blocks at a location spaced above the bottom of the trench.
14. (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein the portion of the footing formed in the voids is formed after the lowermost course of blocks is formed by introducing concrete into the voids via the upper openings thereof.
15. (Original) The method of claim 12, further comprising forming one or more additional courses of retaining wall blocks over the lowermost course after the footing cures.
16. (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein forming a concrete footing in the trench and the voids comprises introducing concrete into the trench and the voids and inserting reinforcing bars into the concrete before the concrete has cured.
17. (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein the voids comprise chambers defined between adjacent blocks in the lowermost course.
18. (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein the voids comprise openings formed in the blocks in the lowermost course.

19. (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein forming the lowermost course comprises positioning a plurality of block assemblies side-by-side over the trench, each block assembly comprising a front block positioned in front of the trench, an anchor block positioned in back of the trench, and an intermediate block extending between a respective front block and anchor block.

20. (Original) The method of claim 19, further comprising excavating a front void in the ground in front of the trench and excavating a rear void in the ground in back of the trench, and wherein the front blocks are positioned in or above the front voids and the anchor blocks are positioned in or above the rear voids.

21. (Original) The method of claim 20, further comprising positioning a first form in the front void and a second form in the rear void, and wherein the front blocks are supported on the first form and the anchor blocks are supported on the second form.

22. (Currently amended) A method for constructing a retaining wall from a plurality of dry-stacked retaining wall blocks, the method comprising:

forming a trench in the ground at the base of an embankment to be retained by the wall;  
positioning a plurality of retaining wall ~~blocks~~ block assemblies side-by-side over the trench to form a lowermost course having a plurality of voids, wherein each block assembly comprises a plurality of interconnected blocks;

forming a concrete base in the trench and the voids of the lowermost course; and  
forming one or more additional courses on top of the lowermost course. ~~without mortar between blocks of adjacent courses.~~

23. (Original) The method of claim 22, wherein at least an upper portion of the base is formed by introducing concrete into the voids via the upper openings thereof.

24. (Original) The method of claim 22, wherein the width of the lowermost course is greater than the width of the base.

25. (Currently amended) A retaining wall comprising:
- at least a first lower course of dry-stacked retaining wall blocks and a second upper course of dry-stacked retaining wall blocks, wherein each course comprises a plurality of voids; and
- a concrete footing having a lower portion located in a trench below the first course, wherein the lower portion comprises an upper surface having a groove; and
- an upper portion located in the voids of at least the first course, wherein the upper portion comprises a downwardly extending projection that forms an interlocking connection with the groove of the lower portion.
26. (Original) The retaining wall of claim 25, wherein the voids are defined between adjacent blocks in a course.
27. (Original) The retaining wall of claim 25, wherein the voids comprise vertically extending cores formed in the blocks.
28. (Original) The retaining wall of claim 25, wherein the blocks of the first course are interconnected to the blocks of the second course by a plurality of block-connecting elements, each block-connecting being received in a respective receptacle in a block of the first course and extending into a respective receptacle in a vertically adjacent block in the second course.
29. (Original) The retaining wall of claim 25, wherein the width of the footing is less than the width of the first course.
30. (Original) The retaining wall of claim 25, wherein the retaining wall blocks of the first course have a front portion extending forwardly of the trench, an anchor portion extending rearwardly of the trench, and an intermediate portion extending over the trench.

31. (Original) The retaining wall of claim 25, wherein each course comprises plural, side-by-side, generally I-shaped block assemblies, each block assembly comprising a front block, an anchor block oriented in a parallel relationship with respect to a respective front block, and a trunk block extending between a respective front block and anchor block, and wherein the front blocks of the first course extend forwardly of the trench and the anchor blocks of the first course extend rearwardly of the trench.

32. (Original) A retaining wall comprising:

at least a first lower course of retaining wall block assemblies and a second upper course of retaining wall block assemblies, wherein each block assembly comprises a front block positioned at the front of the wall, an anchor block disposed in a generally parallel relationship with respect to the front block, and an elongated trunk block extending between and connected to the front block and anchor block, and wherein each course comprises a plurality of chambers defined between adjacent block assemblies; and

a concrete base located in a trench below the first course and extending upwardly into the chambers of the first course to help resist against forces exerted by retained earth at the base of the wall.

33. (Original) The retaining wall of claim 32, wherein the front blocks in the first course are located in front of the trench and the anchor blocks in the first course are located in back of the trench.

34. (Original) The retaining wall of claim 1, wherein the base comprises a lower portion and an upper portion, the lower portion comprising an elongated channel formed in the upper surface thereof, and the upper portion comprising a downwardly extending projection that is received within the channel.

35. (New) The method of claim 1, further comprising positioning a first block support adjacent the front of the trench and a second block support adjacent the rear of the trench, and wherein the act of positioning the plurality of retaining wall blocks comprises positioning the plurality of retaining wall blocks on the first and second supports to form the lowermost course of blocks.

36. (New) The method of claim 35, wherein the first and second block supports comprise concrete forms.

37. (New) The method of claim 35, wherein the first and second block supports comprise first and second beds of aggregate.

38. (New) The method of claim 35, wherein the first block support is disposed in a step adjacent the front of the trench and the second block support is disposed in a step adjacent the rear of the trench.